

# The double canonization of our lifetimes: Two great papal saints

*“The Church calls everyone to make faith a reality in their lives, as the best path ... for attaining true freedom, which includes the recognition of human rights and social justice.”*

— **Blessed Pope John Paul II**



*(Image via Catholic Vote)*

Breaking news from the Vatican resounded all over the world as another chapter in modern church history will be marked on April 27, 2014 with the double canonization ceremony for Blessed Popes John Paul II and John XXIII.

I have been beyond excited ever since Pope Francis announced on July 5 that the canonizations of these two incredible Beati were moving forward. The news came after the approval of a healing miracle credited to Pope John Paul II's intercession, and marks the fastest path to sainthood in modern history, only nine years from the time of his death in 2005. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI had fast-paced this process by dispensing with the usual five-year postmortem waiting period before the beatification process could begin.

Cardinal Angelo Amato, the prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, had announced on August 20 that the date for the double canonization ceremony would be announced at today's ordinary public consistory at the Vatican when the cardinals and those involved in the cause would also formally approve the two Holy Fathers for sainthood.

Pope Francis addressed the issue of timing with reporters on his return flight from World Youth Day in Rio on July 28. He mentioned December 8, this year the Second Sunday in Advent, usually the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, as a possible date that was eliminated due to the usual bad winter road conditions that would affect Polish pilgrims traveling to Rome. He then mentioned that another likely option was the Sunday after Easter, on which Pope John Paul II started the annual celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday back in the Holy Year 2000. For the upcoming liturgical year this celebration of God's immense mercy will fall on April 27, 2014.

Church spokesmen have mentioned that time is needed to plan for the vast number

of pilgrims who will travel to Rome for this historic double canonization. It has been reported that in 2011 over one million people gathered for the beatification ceremony for Pope John Paul II on May 1, also Divine Mercy Sunday.

I remember well watching on EWTN the tremendous crowds of pilgrims who flocked to Rome in 2005 to pay their respects and pray for our beloved late Holy Father. News sources reported over four million were present throughout the city of Rome and jammed in St. Peter's Square for his Funeral Mass on April 8, 2005, in possibly the largest religious pilgrimage in Christian history.

Held just six days after his death, there were endless chants of "Santo Subito" from pilgrims holding up banners and signs. This cry for "Sainthood Now" was the cry of all of us who loved this holy man who led our Church for 27 years. He was our role model and our spiritual guide, our moral hero and our teacher. We cried together at his death and rejoiced at his entrance into glory with Christ.

Ironically, Pope John Paul II was buried under St. Peter's Basilica in the same alcove previously occupied by Pope John XXIII before his remains were moved upstairs to the main church after his beatification. Now we look forward with joy to the celebration of their canonizations. Another note of interest in timing is the canonization date is also the 75th birthday of Pope John Paul II's longtime aide, advisor, and friend, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. I can only imagine the joy that will be in his heart as his dear friend and beloved mentor is named a Saint for all ages:

Pope Saint John Paul the Great!!

I am delighted to share that my husband and I will be in Rome during Holy Week and Easter, able to see firsthand the set up for this historic canonization. As a Vatican philatelist, you can be sure that I will be heading to the Vatican post office to stock up on stamps and first day covers to add to my collection.

When we return home I will share with great joy all that I see and learn as I wait to view with the world six days later the canonization of two great popes on my TV in the English language where I can see everything and savor every word. I predict that we will hear the cheers from Rome resound all over the world!!

### **Two-minute video**

*Watch the announcement made this morning by Pope Francis in Latin of this historic canonization ceremony.*

